

I. Khlyabich

**AN OUTLINE HISTORY
OF PHILOSOPHY**



И. Хлябич

КРАТКИЙ ОЧЕРК ИСТОРИИ ФИЛОСОФИИ

На английском языке

I. Khlyabich



**An Outline History
of Philosophy**



**Progress Publishers
M o s c o w**

Translated from the Russian

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY	5
II. MAIN STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE- MARXIST PHILOSOPHY	15
§ 1. Philosophy in Slave Society	15
§ 2. Philosophy in the Period of Feudalism and the Birth of Capitalism in Western Europe	32
§ 3. Materialism in 18th-Century France	46
§ 4. German Idealist Philosophy at the Turn of the 19th Century	51
§ 5. Feuerbach's Materialism. Russian 19th-Cen- tury Materialist Philosophy	60
III. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM	68
§ 1. The Rise of Marxist Philosophy and Its Basic Difference from Preceding Philosophy	68
§ 2. Development of Marxist Philosophy by Lenin	74
IV. BASIC TRENDS OF CONTEMPORARY BOURGEOIS IDEALIST PHILOSOPHY	90
Main Features of Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy	90

Pragmatism	92
Neo-Positivism	94
Neo-Thomism	97
Existentialism	97

I. THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is one of the most ancient forms of social consciousness. It arose in slave society as a science combining the sum total of man's knowledge of the world around him and of himself. That was quite natural for the low level of knowledge at the early stages of human history.

Since the natural and social sciences were not yet developed and man's knowledge of the laws and connections of phenomena in nature and society was meagre, philosophers sought, on the basis of separate, disjointed empirical data, speculatively to establish the connections not yet revealed by science.

Subsequently, as facts about nature and society were accumulated in different spheres of knowledge and as the process of knowledge itself developed, the branching out and separation of the various sciences began. Simultaneously philosophy as an independent science with its own subject matter was also taking shape.

The subject matter of philosophy changed in line with the development of the particular

sciences and of philosophy itself. This was a result of the development and changes of social relations, of the new social requirements and new tasks which confronted theoretical thinking that is called upon to reflect objective processes in the external world and in man's mind.

Various philosophical trends defined the subject matter of philosophy differently. But the thing common to all pre-Marxist schools was the desire to define philosophy as the science of sciences which subordinates all sciences and embraces the sum total of knowledge of the world obtained by the other sciences. All the sciences of nature, society and thought would in this case play a subordinate, auxiliary role, being, as it were, components of philosophy. Throughout the long history of philosophy many attempts were made to create all-embracing philosophical systems along this line. The last attempt of this kind was made by Hegel, the great idealist philosopher.

Marx and Engels, drawing on the materialist doctrine of Feuerbach, demonstrated the full untenability of Hegel's claim of placing philosophy above the other sciences.

Marx and Engels defined philosophy as the science of the most universal laws governing the development of nature, human society and thought. By specifying the subject matter of philosophy, Marxism steered it onto the road of developing and improving the forms and methods of cognising the most universal laws of being.

The progress of philosophy throughout the

centuries has led to the development within it of such independent branches as ontology, epistemology, logic, ethics, aesthetics, psychology, sociology, and even the history of philosophy, inasmuch as philosophy as a science actually has its own long history.

Marxism substantiated the laws governing the development of nature and society, revealing thereby the objective foundation for the development of all forms of social consciousness, including philosophy.

It showed that the great historical struggles, whether in the political, religious, philosophical or any other ideological sphere, are actually only a more or less clear expression of the struggle of social classes.

Any form of social consciousness reflects the struggle of social classes under way in a class society. The history of philosophy, the struggle of different philosophical schools and trends, consequently must be examined in inseparable connection with the stages of social development.

The struggle of classes in each ideological superstructure has its own, specific, intrinsic character. The struggle of social classes in philosophy since ancient times has assumed the form of struggle between materialism and idealism which pervades the entire history of philosophy.

Materialism and idealism are two antithetical trends in philosophy. Philosophical schools are divided into materialist and idealist, depending on how they treat the fundamental question of

philosophy—the relationship of being and thinking, of nature and spirit.

The fundamental question of philosophy has two sides, usually referred to as the ontological and epistemological sides. The ontological side is the relationship of being and thinking, matter and consciousness in the sense of establishing the primary element of the world: what is to be considered primary, what underlies all being—matter or consciousness. The epistemological side of the fundamental question deals with the relationship of consciousness to the external world, i.e., is our mind, thinking, capable of cognising and properly reflecting the world around us.

Philosophers are divided into two opposite camps by the way they treat the fundamental question of philosophy. If philosophers regard matter as primary and at the same time consider that matter, the world around us and the laws of its development are knowable, they belong in the materialist camp. If they consider consciousness primary and nature secondary, they belong in the camp of idealists.

Philosophers who deny the knowability of the world are called agnostics. Two varieties of agnosticism are differentiated in philosophy. Some agnostics in general deny the existence of an objective world and claim that philosophy can give an answer only to the question of what our sensations and ideas are like and is unable to say whether there is anything beyond our sensations and ideas. Other agnostics, although they do not

deny the existence of things outside man, hold that the things existing outside us are unknowable in principle because they are on the other side of our consciousness. Man can cognise only the properties of a thing, its phenomena, but not the thing itself. Human reason, our mind, they say, is capable of perceiving only what it itself contains.

Consistent materialists adhere to the view that the world is knowable, that human knowledge correctly, adequately reflects the world around us.

We can trace in the history of philosophy various stages in the emergence and development of materialism, from its simplest, naïve and spontaneous forms to the highest form based on data of the contemporary natural sciences, technology and the social sciences.

The materialism of the ancient Greeks was naïve in character. They took nature as they saw it and based their materialist theories on a spontaneous dialectical view of all phenomena of the external world.

Mechanistic and metaphysical materialism came into being during the Renaissance and the period of capitalism's inception. The development of this form of materialism is associated with substantial progress of the sciences, especially mechanics and mathematics. The mechanists regarded all objects and phenomena of the external world from the viewpoint of the laws of mechanics. Another specific feature of these materialists was their metaphysical way of thinking, which is marked by a denial of development in nature and society. True,

not all the materialist schools were equally metaphysical and mechanistic. Some materialists, for example, Bruno, Diderot, and especially the Russian revolutionary democrats Herzen and Chernyshevsky, combined materialism with dialectics which, however, they did not develop to any considerable degree. They did not succeed in fully eliminating the metaphysical and mechanistic nature of the materialism of their time.

Dialectical materialism, in which dialectics and materialism form an organic unity, is the highest form of materialism. Here materialism is enriched by dialectics, while dialectics is elaborated on a materialist basis.

Elaboration of a scientific understanding of social development was a vital element in shaping dialectical materialism. Without a dialectical materialist view of the world it was impossible to defeat idealism in its last refuge, explanation of the essence of human society.

Idealism is not a scientific world outlook. But one must not regard idealism as sheer nonsense, as an absurdity. Such an approach was characteristic of metaphysical materialists. Dialectical materialism has established that the roots of idealism extend to human knowledge itself. The development of thinking, the need to form abstract concepts may lead to the divorce of concepts from the material things themselves. In definite conditions this separation is consolidated and the abstract notions are turned into an absolute. This was very clearly manifested in the absolutisation

of the number by mathematicians who forgot that mathematical formulas express real processes and phenomena of the material world.

Two main trends of idealism should be singled out from among its numerous varieties: objective idealism and subjective idealism.

The main feature of objective idealism is that it regards the idea, the general notion as primary and existing outside man's consciousness. Moreover, all objects and phenomena of the world, according to objective idealists, are only forms of existence of the objective idea which engendered them.

Subjective idealism proceeds from the assumption that the consciousness of man, the subject is primary. All the rest is produced by consciousness. Some subjective idealists completely deny the existence of anything outside consciousness.

Mention should also be made of philosophers who cannot be indisputably classed either as materialists or idealists. These philosophers recognise as primary not one kind of substance—matter or spirit—but consider that both a material and a spiritual substance always existed independent of each other. They construct their philosophical systems by borrowing various propositions from directly opposed theories. Ultimately, the inconsistency and dualistic separation of consciousness from matter lead these philosophers to idealism.

The relationship of matter and consciousness is the fundamental question of philosophy for the very reason that it is so universal and all-embracing

as to cover all philosophical problems, determining not only the solution of specific questions, but also the world outlook as a whole. It provides a reliable criterion for differentiating basic philosophical trends. An exact definition of the fundamental question of philosophy is of great importance for the development of philosophy in general and the history of philosophy in particular. It is inestimable for all the sciences and especially for the natural sciences.

A scientific definition of the two lines in philosophy helps understand the intricate present-day ideological struggle. By studying how the relationship of thinking to being, spirit to nature, has been dealt with since the inception of philosophy and tracing the history of the struggle between materialism and idealism, we at the same time follow the development of the materialist world outlook. The history of philosophy shows how materialism in struggle against idealism gained in strength and advanced, how it eliminated its limited and one-sided character and developed into its highest form, dialectical materialism.

As we trace the development of materialism from the naïvely spontaneous form it had in Ancient Greece through the mechanicism and metaphysics of later periods, up to its highest form, dialectical materialism, we at the same time follow the development of dialectics. The ancient Greek materialists considered phenomena of the world from the viewpoint of spontaneous and naïve dialectics. Rudiments of dialectics, based on a deeper

scientific knowledge of nature, appeared in the doctrines of 17th-18th century materialists. German idealist philosophy at the turn of the 19th century exhaustively criticised metaphysics and elaborated (Hegel in the first place) the prime foundations of idealist dialectics. Lastly, the materialist dialectics of Marxism-Leninism was created, which in dialectical materialism received its highest development by virtue of organic unity with materialism.

Tracing the struggle of materialism and idealism, of dialectics and metaphysics, the Marxist history of philosophy acts on the principle that social ideas and philosophical views do not arise of themselves. They ultimately are a product of the socio-economic and political conditions of the given society and express the interests of definite social classes and social groups. Consequently, in a scientific history of philosophy different philosophical schools and trends are examined in connection with the socio-economic system of the given historical period.

In view of a certain relative independence of philosophy, as of ideology in general, different philosophical schools and trends are connected with each other by historical succession.

The Marxist history of philosophy considers that human thought created in the past the prerequisites for the contemporary development of human knowledge.

Philosophy has accumulated all the theoretical and cognitive wealth of past generations. Lenin pointed out that the history of philosophy reflects

the history of human knowledge in general. A study of the history of philosophy helps find the embryos of many brilliant discoveries made much later, including the contemporary theories of the structure of matter. The history of philosophy is closely connected with the history of the other sciences and, by virtue of this, is of great importance for enriching and developing the human intellect.

The history of philosophy demonstrates how knowledge of the world developed and thus helps us understand how the dialectical development of thinking proceeded in step with the extension of human knowledge and in close connection with the practical activity of society. The history of philosophy is of great significance for the entire activity of man in transforming the world and at the same time is a powerful means for developing theoretical thinking in general.

"Theoretical thinking," Engels said, "is an innate quality only as regards natural capacity. This natural capacity must be developed, improved, and for its improvement there is as yet no other means than the study of previous philosophy."*

* Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 44.

II. MAIN STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-MARXIST PHILOSOPHY

§ 1. Philosophy in Slave Society

The legacy of the peoples who created the oldest seats of culture in Asia, Africa and Southern Europe was of great importance for the development of philosophy.

Historical documents in which the rudiments of spontaneous materialist views are recorded, date back to the end of the third and beginning of the second millenniums B.C., the period when the first slave societies we know, Egypt and Babylon, reached their apex. Important views on life were expressed in the *Song of a Harp Player*, *Conversation of a Disappointed Man with His Soul* and *Conversation of a Master with His Slave*. Alongside a strikingly expressed anti-religious trend, we find there general rudiments of materialist ideas. In writings of ancient Oriental thinkers we find the idea that water is the primary element of everything existing, that all life, all things, originate from water.

The first materialist doctrines appeared, together with the birth of philosophy in slave societies of ancient India, China and Greece several centuries B.C.

The materialist doctrine in Indian philosophy which appeared about the 8th century B.C. was called Lokāyata. This teaching explained the world on the basis of real concepts of sensory things, denying any supernatural force whatsoever. Brihaspati, according to mythological sources, was the founder of Lokāyata. The well-known materialist school of the Charvacas particularly stood out among the proponents of the Lokāyata doctrine. They held that the world consists of four elements: earth, water, air and fire. The material world was regarded as eternal; the philosophy of the Charvacas was thus directed against religion, against an idealist world outlook. The Charvacas also opposed the dualism of the philosophical school of the Sāṅkhya which held that the prime cause of the world was both a material and a spiritual element. The philosophy of the Charvacas played an important part in the subsequent development of philosophy in general.

In China the first materialist views appeared about the same time. Somewhat later these views were systematised by Lao-tse in Taoism. According to this teaching, all things came into being and change in their own way, Tao. The conversion of Tao into an absolute subsequently led to the establishment of the religious sect of Taoists who held that Tao is the spiritual substance of everything existing.

Philosophy developed in various cities of Ancient Greece beginning with the 7th century B.C. The slave system, which had gained in strength by

that time, at first promoted the economic and cultural development of the city-states which had extensive trade ties. Owing to these contacts the philosophy of the ancient Greeks developed under the influence of the philosophy of the peoples of Africa and Asia Minor, where evidently the rudiments of natural science and philosophy had arisen earlier.

The founders of ancient Greek philosophy Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes were materialists of the Milesian philosophical school (Miletus was a large centre of trade, shipping and culture). These thinkers were outstanding scientists of their time. The development of ancient society dictated the need for gaining better knowledge of the world, since the religious mythology prevailing at the time gave a distorted view of the world and did not promote the development of the productive forces. The Milesian thinkers arrived at profound philosophical generalisations important for the subsequent progress of philosophy. They made some significant discoveries in astronomy, geography and mathematics. Looking for an explanation of the world in the world itself, they sought the primary source of the world in something material.

Thales (624-547 B.C.), for example, held that water as something real, tangible and visible was the single elementary matter of the world. Anaximander (610-546 B.C.) saw the basis of everything existing in the "infinite" (apeiron). He understood this "infinite" as something tangible and palpable.

Anaximenes (588-525 B.C.) was close to Anaximander, but in his doctrine air was the primary element of the world.

Considering the way these philosophers defined the essence and basis of the external world, Engels said that there "is already the whole original spontaneous materialism which at its beginning quite naturally regards the unity of the infinite diversity of natural phenomena as a matter of course, and seeks it in something definitely corporeal".*

These naïve, spontaneous materialist doctrines of the Milesians were diametrically opposed to the no less naïve but unscientific world outlook based on mythology which prevailed at that time. The opposite nature of these world outlooks was noted by ancient authors. The first materialists did not raise the problem of relationship of being and thinking. To them the soul was one of the forms of matter. There were considerable remnants of mythological views of the world in the Milesian doctrine. Spirits and gods filled nature. But the ancient Greek materialists regarded the gods as usual phenomena of the world, seeing nothing supernatural in them.

The next stage, following the Milesian philosophers, is associated with the name of Heraclitus (544-483 B.C.). We can discern in his doctrine a dialectical materialist approach to explaining the world, although in a naïve form. Heraclitus con-

* Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 189.

sidered fire the material source of everything existing. When condensed, fire produces all things and when rarified, these things again turn into fire. Heraclitus held that everything was in a state of constant change and development. He was the first to express the surmise about the contradictory character of development, the struggle of opposites and even the passage of one opposite into another. Referring to Heraclitus's well-known statement that "this one order of all things was created by none of the gods, nor yet by any of mankind, but it ever was, and is, and shall be—eternal fire—ignited by measure and extinguished by measure", Lenin said that this was a "very good exposition of the principles of dialectical materialism".*

The philosophy of Heraclitus played a big part in developing the dialectical view on the phenomena of the external world. It was highly valued by Marx and Engels.

Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.) was among the first Greek materialists who made a big contribution to the development of philosophy. He was one of the first to voice the supposition that everything in the world consists of tiniest indestructible elements which are infinitely divisible. Under the influence of particularly fine matter "nous" (mind), these elements are set into motion and form everything around us.

The materialist theories of the ancient Greeks were summed up in the philosophy of the founders

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 349.

of atomism Leucippus (500-440 B.C.), and especially Democritus (460-370 B.C.), the most notable proponent of materialism in antiquity. Democritus was a versatile scientist who contributed more than 70 works on philosophy, physics, mathematics, medicine, physiology, music, etc. Marx called Democritus "the first encyclopaedic mind among the Greeks".*

Democritus belonged to the merchant-artisan part of the class of slave-owners who sought to develop the productive forces and stood in opposition to the reactionary part connected with land-ownership. Both were slave-owners, but the social groups interested in the development of production had to rely on a materialist doctrine, which gave them better orientation in life.

Democritus solved the fundamental question of philosophy in a materialist way. Everything in the world, according to his theory, consists of tiniest indivisible particles—atoms—and a void. The atoms are eternal, immutable and indivisible, they do not come into being and are indestructible. They are simple in their quality and yield to no outside influence. The atoms—and their number is countless—uniting in different order and being in different relation to each other, make up all the things around us. The atoms themselves are real, material.

Recognising the atoms as the primary source of everything existing, Democritus for the first time

* Marx, Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 146.

in the history of philosophy invested them with motion. Democritus held that the atoms move without any order, "vibrating in all directions". Democritus placed scientific study on the proper road when he said that everything comes into being and is destroyed owing to the endless motion of the atoms.

The atoms move in a void: uniting, they cause existence and dispersing—destruction.

Although Democritus, like all ancient materialists, offered no reason for the motion of the atoms, he nevertheless expressed the supposition about the immanence of motion and denied the need for a source of motion external in relation to matter.

Democritus solved in a materialist way the other side of the fundamental question of philosophy. According to Democritus the external world is cognised with the help of man's senses and reason.

He was the first to pose the question of the relationship between the sensory and the rational in knowledge.

He held that sense-perception, although it is the basis of all knowledge, produces only "obscure" knowledge. The essence of everything in the external world can be learned by "clear" knowledge only through reason.

In the philosophy of Democritus we have a developed form of ancient materialism, its highest form. By his attempts to explain all the phenomena of the world on the basis of intrinsic necessity, Democritus played a big part in the development of natural science.

The materialist philosophy of Democritus was closely bound up with his progressive, democratic views. It exerted a great impact not only on the philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome, but also on the philosophy of later times. Many eminent scientists were under the influence of his atomic theory. Lenin named the materialist line in philosophy after Democritus.

Epicurus (341-270 B. C.) continued the line of Democritus, developing his teaching further. Epicurus, proceeding from Democritus's atomic theory, introduced an essentially new element in this teaching, allowing the spontaneous deviation of atoms from the straight path they travel in the world. This enabled Epicurus to furnish a deeper concept of the origin of the universe and better to substantiate the origin of all things. The assumption of the spontaneous deviation of atoms from their path introduced an element of spontaneity and this, to a certain extent, eliminated the fatalism of Democritus who denied any chance whatsoever. Epicurus's doctrine of man, the soul, knowledge and also his ethics are completely based on the materialist propositions of atomism.

Lucian, renowned writer of antiquity, left interesting testimony concerning the struggle of materialism and idealism of those days.

In a satire against Alexander, a reactionary ideologist, Lucian wrote: "Alexander and Epicurus fought a war with neither truce nor herald, and this was natural. Whom else could the fraud, lover of all kinds of fancy tales about miracles and the

loather of nature have more reason to fight against than Epicurus who studied the nature of things and was the only man who knew the truth about it."

According to Lucian, the followers of Plato and Pythagoras were among the opponents of Epicurus. Alexander called for the physical destruction of Epicurus and publicly burned his *Basic Principles*.

The Roman philosopher Titus Lucretius Carus (99-55 B.C.) was a later follower of Democritus and Epicurus.

In the philosophy of Lucretius atomic materialism of the ancient world reached its apex. In his poem *De natura rerum* (*On the Nature of Things*), Lucretius expounded the atomic theory of the structure of the world, according to which the world consists of atoms and a void. The atoms differ in size, shape, and weight. The entire diversity of the world is produced by different combinations of atoms continuously moving in the void. Lucretius voiced many interesting ideas about space and time and denied the universal animateness of matter. He also treated in a materialist way the second side of the fundamental question of philosophy, considering the external world the source of knowledge. Lucretius was the most outstanding atheist of antiquity. He held that nature develops according to its own laws and needs no supernatural force for explaining it. The people themselves invented the gods, he declared.

His philosophy completed the development of ancient materialism.

What makes ancient materialism important in the history of philosophy is that it admitted the materiality of the world and its independence of man's consciousness and also that it sought for a material primary element of the world. Atomism was its great achievement. Naïve dialectics was intrinsic in ancient materialism. It was not free of remnants of mythology, and for this reason regarded all nature as animate. Ancient materialism was naïve, resting on data of sciences which were just beginning to develop. It did not even pose many important questions, for instance, the relationship of the physical and the psychical.

Let us now turn to idealist trends in philosophy which existed in Ancient Greece. The doctrines of Parmenides and Zeno of the philosophical school which arose in Elea in the 6th-5th centuries B.C. contained rudiments of idealism alongside materialist views. Pythagoras (580-500 B.C.) and Socrates (469-399 B.C.) actually initiated the turn towards idealism in ancient Greek philosophy.

Mythological notions of the world made themselves felt in the doctrine of Pythagoras, ancient Greek mathematician and philosopher. According to Pythagoras the world was a living fire-breathing spherical body. The void penetrating this body from the surrounding space was the cause of the division and separation of things. Engaging in mathematics, Pythagoras converted into an absolute the abstraction of numbers and divorced them from the material objects, arriving at the conclusion that numbers were the essence of all things.

Subsequently this served as a basis for the Pythagorean mathematical symbolism which grew over into the mysticism of numbers. Ultimately idealist and mystic tendencies prevailed in the Pythagorean school.

It should be noted that rudiments of idealistic dialectics were present in the theories of the Pythagoreans.

For his political views Pythagoras was a supporter of the aristocracy and waged a bitter struggle against Athenian democracy.

Socrates was one of the great philosophers who founded objective idealism.

Socrates understood philosophy as a doctrine of right life. He did not recognise natural philosophy, adversely regarded the cognition of nature and in his theory of knowledge attached little importance to the sense-organs.

The essence of knowledge, according to Socrates, consists in discovering the common in a number of things. He called for concentrating on self-knowledge. Know thyself—this is the central point of Socrates's philosophy.

He was an enemy of democracy and exerted influence on his numerous disciples, most of whom, like he, persistently fought against democracy. For this he was accused of corrupting the youth and by court sentence was condemned to drink the poison hemlock.

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 B.C.) is considered the father of objective idealism.

Just as Democritus summed up the earlier ma-

materialist doctrines and created a harmonious materialist system, so Plato created an idealist system based on the rudiments of idealism in the doctrines of the Eleatic school and the Pythagoreans and also on the philosophy of his teacher Socrates.

In contrast to Democritus who held that material particles, atoms, are primary, making up everything existing, Plato regarded spiritual substances, ideas, as primary. The main thing in Plato's doctrine is that the material world does not possess true reality, that it is merely a phantom and reflection of the ideal world which lies beyond the bounds of the visible world.

Plato glorified the world of ideas. As for the material world, he regarded that it consists of sensory and transitory things and objects, and considered it a changeable and inconstant shadow of the world of ideas.

In contrast to the atomists who held that in reality only individual things exist, while the general is a notion of these individual things, Plato asserted that in reality only ideas exist because only they are eternal and non-transitory. All things are created and destroyed, and for this reason cannot represent something true because only that which is eternal, non-transitory, can be true.

In contraposition to the atomists, Plato taught that the soul is immortal, asserting that it exists separately of the body. He introduced elements of mysticism in the concept of the soul, ascribing to it mystery, uncreatability, eternity, and reincarnation in other bodies after death.

While the materialists explained the origin of nature and man by purely materialist causes, Plato asserted that there is a creator who purposively created everything. Plato's doctrine thus is of a theological character and is directly opposed to the atheistic nature of the doctrines of the atomists.

Plato's theory of knowledge is likewise idealistic. According to his theory, only ideas can be cognised. Man can only recall what his soul contemplated when it existed separately of the body. Moreover, sense-perception has no bearing on the cognition of ideas. True knowledge cannot be based on the senses because the senses can conceive only the sensory, i.e., the transitory, that which is subject to destruction, that which surrounds us, but they cannot conceive that which is beyond the bounds of the visible world—ideas—which could only be perceived by reason. Sense-perception can give only an opinion about transitory and changeable things, but not true knowledge. Opinion, according to Plato's doctrine, is not true knowledge but something intermediate between ignorance and knowledge.

Plato was a militant philosopher and politician, an irreconcilable enemy of both materialism and the slave-owning democracy which rested on the materialist teaching. He created a theory of an ideal aristocratic state based on slave labour. According to his theory, the state is ruled by slave-owning aristocrats as represented by philosophers, it is protected by warriors, while artisans produce everything necessary. In his doctrine of the ideal

state Plato, according to Marx, brilliantly understood the role played by the division of labour in forming the Greek states.

Plato was the most outstanding idealist philosopher of the ancient world and that is why Lenin named the idealist trend in philosophy after him. Plato's doctrine played a prominent part in the evolution of idealist philosophy. It is utilised by the enemies of a materialist world outlook to this day.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), whom Engels considered the most universal head among ancient Greek philosophers, reached the summit of ancient philosophy.

Aristotle's teaching is contradictory. He held an intermediate position, vacillating between materialism and idealism, inconsistently dealing with the fundamental question of philosophy. On the whole, his philosophy is a variety of objective idealism. But, according to Lenin's definition, the idealism of Aristotle is of a peculiar form: in many respects it is "more objective and *further removed, more general* than the idealism of Plato, hence in the philosophy of nature more frequently-materialism*"; Aristotle comes very close to materialism".**

All things, according to Aristotle, are a unity of form and content. Four causes underlie everything existing in the world: 1) matter or passive potentiality of becoming; 2) form (essence of being),

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 283.

** *Ibid.*, p. 287.

reality of what in matter was only potentiality; 3) beginning of motion; 4) purpose.

Aristotle's idealism is most distinctly displayed in the doctrine of form which he considered the essence of being and to which he ascribed eternity and immutability, and also in the doctrine of the prime mover, god, which, although itself immobile, is the source of every motion.

Aristotle subjected Plato, his teacher, to devastating criticism for his striving to separate general concepts, ideas, from sensually perceived things. Aristotle proceeded from the principle that there is no general without the individual and the general itself is cognised thanks to the sense-perception of the individual. Lenin regarded Aristotle's criticism of Plato's idealism as criticism of idealism in general, holding that it strengthened the positions of materialism.

Aristotle made a great contribution to the study of the forms of thinking. He elaborated formal logic so fully and all-embracingly that it exists to this day almost intact. Aristotle systematically studied concepts, statements and conclusions, and formulated the basic laws of formal logic, such as the law of identity, the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle.

Aristotle has also made a profound analysis of philosophical categories.

He wrote a special work in which he thoroughly studied ten primary categories such as essence, quality, quantity, relation, place, time, position, possession, action and suffering. But in other

works, too, Aristotle examined many categories of logic and philosophy which are current in science to this day.

The doctrine of Aristotle, although he vacillated between materialism and idealism, contained much that was valuable for the subsequent development of philosophy and the other sciences because he succeeded in systematising and generalising almost all spheres of science of his time. It may be said that philosophy with its definite subject matter actually began to take shape only after the appearance of such works by Aristotle as *Metaphysics* and *The Categories*. Aristotle was a most outstanding figure in the science of the ancient world, which was not yet branched out, and the greatest philosopher of antiquity.

The importance of Aristotle in the history of philosophy is explained not only by the fact that he systematised and developed many sciences and solved in a materialist way major questions of philosophy, but also by his detailed elaboration of dialectics which, though based on the relatively scanty data of science of his day, has not lost its significance in our time either.

One of mankind's greatest thinkers, Aristotle at the same time was limited by the bounds of the slave society. In view of this, his socio-political views resolved to justifying the division of people into slaves and slave-owners. Aristotle asserted that people are always born either slaves or masters, for such is the predestination of the principal element, the soul. True, being a supporter of

slave-owning democracy, he denounced both tyranny and the power of the oligarchy. He considered most acceptable a slave state with democratic rule by the middle stratum of citizens.

Aristotle's inconsistency in philosophy was the reason why his doctrine was utilised in later times by the most opposite trends.

The materialist tendencies in Aristotle's teaching facilitated the development of science in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, while idealist elements were borrowed by the clergy who reduced his teaching to dead scholasticism.

* * *

Ancient Greek philosophy has exerted a tremendous impact on all subsequent philosophy up to our days. This is explained by the fact that "the manifold forms of Greek philosophy contain in embryo, in the nascent state, almost all later modes of outlook on the world".*

The struggle of materialism and idealism in the ancient world reflected the struggle of social classes in slave society and was of a keen political character. Partisans of the opposite philosophical camps were simultaneously members of hostile political parties. As early as in antiquity the ruling classes sought to stifle materialist doctrines by repressions.

The struggle of materialism against idealism in antiquity was not consistent because the material-

* Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 189.

ism of the ancient Greeks which was naïve and spontaneous, was not, and could not be, sufficiently backed by data of science. Nor should we forget that the proponents of both philosophical trends represented the exploiting part of society which had common interests in suppressing the slaves. These common basic interests could not but affect the philosophical doctrines themselves.

With the collapse of slave society ancient philosophy declined too.

§ 2. Philosophy in the Period of Feudalism and the Birth of Capitalism in Western Europe

The struggle of materialism and idealism did not stop in the Middle Ages either. Feudalism demanded of ideologists an explanation of the world which would meet the requirements of the feudal lords and the Church. The Church, itself a big feudal owner, was the ideological law-giver in the Middle Ages.

Church dogmas became the cornerstone of every thought. Engels noted that "jurisprudence, natural science, philosophy—the entire content of these sciences was brought into conformity with the teaching of the Church".*

Philosophy was subordinated to religion in the literal sense of the word. It was assigned the task of studying only problems and pseudo-problems

* Marx, Engels, *Works*, Vol. 21, Part I, p. 496 (in Russian).

connected with Church dogmas and the Gospel. Since the Church did not allow a study of the development of nature and philosophers were called upon to demonstrate the existence of God in the immortality of the soul, philosophy as such degenerated into scholasticism during that period.

But even under the weight of medieval scholasticism a hidden struggle between materialism and idealism, which assumed the form of a conflict between nominalism and realism, could be discerned.

Nominalism and realism were the two most distinct opposite trends which crystallised in medieval philosophy.

The nominalists to a certain extent expressed materialist tendencies within scholasticism, inasmuch as they, although with reservations, admitted the real existence of the objects and phenomena of nature, considering general concepts to be secondary, derivative.

On the other hand, realists held general concepts primary, existing independently of individual objects and phenomena. In the opinion of the realists, individual objects and phenomena are secondary and exist only as a form of manifestation of general concepts.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was the most prominent realist. Of the nominalists mention should be made of Duns Scotus (1265-1308) and William Occam (date of birth unknown, died in 1349).

The doctrines of the scholasticists, who interpreted the philosophy of Aristotle and his followers to substantiate a religious world outlook, were

an expression and consolidation of the ideology of Catholicism.

Religion taught that the human body is a temporary abode of the immortal soul and that man should care not for his body but for the salvation of his soul. It urged people to forget earthly hardships, reconcile themselves to the violence and injustice of the ruling classes and think not of mundane life but of future heavenly life.

The religious world outlook did not in the least stimulate a study of nature. Moreover, the clergy did everything to hamper the progress of science and eradicated the slightest trace of materialist doctrines. But nascent capitalism and the development of new productive forces confronted science with new tasks which it could not accomplish on the basis of idealism.

The experience of life and practical activity undermined the idealistic canons and Church dogmas. The rising bourgeoisie needed a science which would help it harness the forces of nature. Genuine knowledge of nature could be based only on a materialist science. And such a science began to make its appearance.

Engels wrote on this score: "Parallel with the rise of the middle class went on the great revival of science; astronomy, mechanics, physics, anatomy, physiology were again cultivated. And the bourgeoisie, for the development of its industrial production, required a science which ascertained the physical properties of natural objects and the modes of action of the forces of nature.

Now up to then science had but been the humble handmaiden of the Church, had not been allowed to overstep the limits set by faith, and for that reason had been no science at all. Science rebelled against the Church; the bourgeoisie could not do without science and, therefore, had to join in the rebellion.”*

Alongside the progress of the natural sciences, philosophy started to develop, but now as a branch of knowledge divorced from religion.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) were the most outstanding scientists and philosophers of the period when the new, capitalist formation originated. They could be called the materialist forerunners of bourgeois ideology.

The path of pioneering scientists was thorny in the age of the Renaissance. They often had to begin literally from scratch, and to accomplish anything had to overcome the scholasticist theological tradition which was hostile to science at its root. The new science had to break its way through in struggle against the reactionary forces of decaying feudalism.

Still harder was the road of the philosophers who had to fight against idealism, mysticism and theological scholasticism, for the development of a scientific materialist world outlook. The struggle against the obsolete ideas of the past often ended

* Marx, Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 103.

in the physical annihilation of the brave trail-blazers.

The revival of science proceeded under the banner of the atomism of Democritus and Epicurus. Bruno adhered to atomic views. Galileo was persecuted for sharing the views of Democritus and Epicurus. Bacon referred with sympathy to Democritus, treating with much less respect the "chatterers" Aristotle and Plato.

Engels associates the emancipation of natural science from theology with Copernicus's doctrine, after which science began to develop at gigantic strides. Engels noted that this was "a time which called for giants and produced giants—giants in power of thought, passion and character, in universality and learning".*

The Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno was the most outstanding fighter against scholasticism and a religious world outlook. Together with Paracelsus, Telèsio, Copernicus and Galileo, he represented the vanguard of the matérialists who rose up against the doctrine of Aristotle dogmatised and deified by the scholasticists.

In the Aristotelian doctrine, as interpreted and canonised by the scholasticists, the world is finite and immutable, the earth is immobile and the heavens are imperishable. This formed the basis for the teaching of the Church.

Giordano Bruno, making use of Copernicus's theory of the rotation of the Earth around the Sun

* Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 21.

and the daily rotation of the Earth around its axis, asserted that the world is infinite and is subject to eternal change.

Bruno advocated the homogeneity of the earthly and heavenly world consisting of air, fire, water, earth and ether. He maintained that the universe is infinite and made up of countless worlds. He explained the rise of new forms of matter by its endless motion. True, Bruno's doctrine of the motion of matter lacked consistency, because he admitted the existence of a world soul which was inherent in things and was their motive element.

His teaching contained many dialectical propositions, for example, on unity, connection and universal motion in nature, unity of the physical and the spiritual, living and non-living.

Giordano was truly an irreconcilable militant materialist. He visited almost all the cultural centres of his time, fervently advocating the ideas of the new world outlook.

The clergy could not forgive his encroachments on the basic Church dogmas. After many years of imprisonment he was burned at the stake by the Inquisition in Rome.

Marx considered the English philosopher Francis Bacon the true founder of materialism of the new times. Bacon drew on the achievements of contemporary science in his fight against medieval scholasticism. He came out against scholasticism, relying on the doctrines of the ancient Greek materialists and criticising idealism. He reproached Aristotle for his idealism, stressing that the latter

"altogether enslaved his Natural Philosophy to his Logic, and so rendered it nearly useless, and contentious".

Bacon sharply criticised the philosophy of Pythagoras for being mixed with superstition. But he regarded the philosophy of Plato and his school as the most dangerous. He also ridiculed the new philosophers who had gone to such lengths as to try and base natural philosophy on the Holy Scriptures.

In contrast to this, Bacon spoke with respect of the theories of Anaxagoras, Leucippus, Democritus and Empedocles, because they "have all something of the Natural Philosopher in them; and have a savour of the nature of things, of experience, and of bodies".

Bacon vigorously attacked the foes of materialism who impeded the development of science. He said that ignorant theologians were barring natural philosophy for fear, that a deeper study of nature would transgress the bounds permitted by good intention and would discover in nature something that might upset or shake religion.

Bacon adhered to the atomic theory of Democritus. He formulated a materialist doctrine of form which, in his opinion, was some kind of motion of material particles which make up things.

Attacking scholasticism, he proposed a reformation of science, cleansing it of delusions founded on false concepts. He called for experimentation.

His most important work is *The Novum Organum* (or *True Guide to the Interpretation of Na-*

ture), in which he declared that the purpose of science was to extend man's power over nature and proposed a method of scientific study based on a rational analysis of experimental data. Bacon criticised the idealist logic of the scholasticists because its method of argument allowed nature to slip through its hands. He himself proposed a form of argument which would consider data of the senses and strive for practical experience, almost merging with it.

Bacon saw the foundation of knowledge in sense-perception but at the same time was opposed both to bare empiricism based solely on the collection of facts without analysing them and to the dogmatism of the rationalists who, like a spider spinning his web, deduced a system of propositions from their own concepts. True knowledge is gained by a scientist who, like a bee, gathers nectar from different flowers and processes it into honey.

Bacon played a big part in the development of pre-Marxist philosophy and the experimental sciences, exerting considerable influence on future materialist philosophers.

The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was an outstanding materialist of the 17th century. He systematised the materialism of Bacon. Hobbes held that the world consists of a totality of bodies subordinated to the laws of mechanical motion. All the diversity of bodies and their properties depends on the motion of material elements.

The philosophy of Hobbes was a new, mechan-

istic form of materialism, based on the achievements of mechanics and mathematics.

For the first time in the history of philosophy Hobbes formulated all-embracing principles of mechanistic materialism. To Hobbes, Marx pointed out, geometry and mechanics were the prototypes of scientific thinking in general. He summed up and universalised them, applying them to all spheres of knowledge. Hobbes regarded motion as purely mechanical shifting in space; all forms of motion were reduced to mechanical motion. This brought him to a denial of the objectivity of the qualities of things: light, sound, smell, taste, colour, etc. He saw sensory qualities not in the objective qualities of things themselves, but considered them forms of subjective perception. His mechanicism prevented him from properly solving the problem of space and time and also a number of other problems. His theory of knowledge was likewise mechanistic. He could not understand the dialectical connection between the rational and empirical forms of knowledge, and did not provide a scientific groundwork for the basic principle of materialism—the origin of knowledge and ideas in the world of the senses.

The initial principle of Hobbes's doctrine of society is the assertion that in a "natural" state, i.e., before combining in state organisations, "man to man is a wolf".

From this follows the idea of the "war of all against all". To preserve peace in society people create a state. Hobbes considered the monarchy

an ideal form of rule. On the whole, his teaching was a step forward in the history of philosophy. He developed the mechanistic form of materialism, took steps to bring philosophy and the natural sciences closer together and also elaborated problems of society's life raised in the epoch of bourgeois revolutions.

The French mathematician and philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) created his philosophical doctrine in the same period. Descartes developed materialist ideas in physics. Nature, he asserted, is a continuous totality of material particles, and extension is a distinctive property of matter. Motion of the material world is eternal and proceeds according to the laws of mechanics. In his treatment of the fundamental question of philosophy Descartes was a dualist. He recognised two primary elements independent of each other, material and spiritual.

The existence of the body and the soul, according to Descartes, is determined by a third substance, god. Descartes was the founder of the rationalist trend in the theory of knowledge. He held that the senses give only a vague idea of things and thereby are misleading. The truth is perceived directly by reason with its innate intuition.

Having deep faith in the power of the human reason, Descartes held it was necessary to create a new, scientific method of cognising the world, to replace blind faith by knowledge and reason.

Despite the idealist approach to the fundamental question of philosophy, recognition of the

existence of a spiritual substance and innate ideas, Descartes by his materialist views of nature notably facilitated the progress of science and philosophy.

The Dutch materialist philosopher Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza (1632-1677) holds a prominent place in the history of philosophy. In contrast to the dualist Descartes, he considered nature the sole substance which is its own cause. Nature is eternal and infinite. Spinoza recognised the sensory nature of knowledge. But he placed intellectual knowledge above it and in this was close to Cartesian rationalism. In his doctrine of society Spinoza was a follower of Hobbes, with the only difference that he considered democratic rule, and not an absolute monarchy, the highest form of government, and limited the power of the state to the requirements of freedom.

John Locke (1632-1704), an English materialist philosopher, directly continued the materialism of Bacon and Hobbes. He is known in the history of philosophy for his big contribution to major problems of the theory of knowledge.

Locke laid experience at the basis of his theory of knowledge. He criticised Descartes's doctrine of "innate ideas". Ideas can only be produced by experience. According to Locke, there is internal experience (sensations) and external (reflection). Ideas which arise owing to sensations are explained by the influence of objects of the surrounding world on the sense-organs. Ideas which man gains with the help of the sense-organs were called by

him sensitive ideas. Reflective ideas, on the other hand, arise as a result of concentrating on the state and activity of the soul.

Sensitive ideas enable man to learn the qualities of things. Locke divided qualities into primary and secondary. Primary qualities are those inherent in the things themselves and inseparable from them, for example, density, shape, extension, motion, etc.

Locke regarded as secondary such qualities, for example, as colour, sound, taste, etc., which, in his opinion, are not inherent in things themselves. Things only possess the ability of producing such sensations in man.

Locke's division of qualities into primary and secondary shows that he did not overcome the metaphysical divorce of the objective from the subjective.

Nor did Locke get rid of contrasting the sensory and the rational in the theory of knowledge. Although Locke paid due tribute to sensory knowledge he regarded the knowledge derived in a speculative, rational way as most truthful.

Telèsio, Copernicus, Bruno, Galileo, Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza and Locke contradictorily and indecisively, at times unconsciously reflected in their philosophy the objective requirements of the new social forces. They were opposed by the vowed foes of materialism who entered into an alliance with the bourgeoisie after it became a recognised part of the ruling classes and lost interest in materialist doctrines.

The English philosophers Berkeley and Hume, fathers of subjective idealism, were among the most bellicose enemies of materialism.

Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) fought against the materialist world outlook all his life. Denial of the very concept of matter was the pivot of his entire philosophy.

Berkeley attacked the materialist principles of cosmogony, criticising the materialist content of the theories of progressive philosophers. He contemptuously likened the opinion of philosophers who recognised matter to the opinion of the mob.

Berkeley called for discarding the "material substance". The very concept of matter, he claimed, was intrinsically contradictory and played no essential part in knowledge.

He asserted that since all the "monstrous systems" of the materialists clearly and necessarily depended on a corporeal substance (matter), the removal of this cornerstone, as he intended to do, would cause the entire edifice to collapse to its foundations. Together with the expulsion of matter from nature there would vanish many sceptical and impious notions.

He fought against the "wild fantasies" of Vani-ni, Hobbes and Spinoza which, in his opinion, wrongly assumed that the entire visible world or some part of it, even if only the crudest and shapeless—exists outside the soul.

He spoke up against Newton's hypotheses of motion, space, extension, infinitesimals, etc.

According to Berkeley, the material world is

a non-existent phenomenon. He adhered to extreme subjectivism, considering that things exist only in man's perception. Only when man directly senses things—sees, hears, touches—do they exist. Later on, however, he took to positions of objective idealism and began to assert that some infinite spirit exists, whose mind contains all ideas of things.

David Hume (1711-1776), another subjective idealist, asserted that man, far from knowing what things as such are, does not even know whether they really exist. Hume considered that the problem of whether objective reality existed or not was insoluble. He arrived at the conclusion that only a stream of psychical perceptions existed in the human mind and that science resolved to a simple description of this stream and it was unable to grasp any laws. Hume thus adhered to positions of scepticism, a philosophical trend which advocates doubt in the existence of the world and the possibility of knowing it.

Berkeley's subjective idealism and Hume's scepticism provided the classical form of bourgeois philosophy. It did not stimulate revolutionary ideas, did not affect the foundations of the Church and the state and in general in no way threatened the established capitalist social order.

Lenin gave a detailed analysis and appraisal of the subjective idealist philosophy of Berkeley, Hume and their followers in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.*

* See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14.

§ 3. Materialism in 18th-Century France

The epoch of the Great French Revolution at the end of the 18th century was marked by a notable advance in philosophy. This epoch which aimed to put an end to feudalism produced a whole galaxy of materialist scientists: Diderot, d'Alembert, La Mettrie, Helvétius, Holbach, Condillac, Robinet and others, who reflected the interests of the progressive French bourgeoisie.

French 18th-century materialism was a new, higher stage in the development of materialist thought as compared with materialism of the 17th century.

The French materialists picked up the banner of the ancient Greek atomists, taking thereby a definite stand in the struggle within philosophy.

Marx pointed out that French materialism, like the English, always preserved an internal link with Democritus and Epicurus.

Denis Diderot (1713-1784) is deservedly considered the head of the French 18th-century materialists. He most consistently elaborated the principal questions of philosophy in his time.

Diderot considered the world material. Matter is the only substance from which all the diverse objects are formed. Like other French materialists, he developed the idea of the English philosopher Toland concerning the unity of matter and motion. Nature, in Diderot's opinion, is in constant motion and development.

Diderot voiced many dialectical suppositions

concerning the nature of motion and the constant changeability of all forms of nature. He overcame the metaphysical contraposition of matter and consciousness, by making an assumption about the universal sensitivity of matter. Diderot voiced a profound idea about the material basis of psychic activity of animals and man, anticipating to a certain extent subsequent discoveries in this field. He considered the world knowable and criticised all who denied the cognitive abilities of man.

Science of those days did not give Diderot the opportunity to bridge the gap between sensation and concept. But sharing the views of Locke about primary and secondary qualities, he stressed the objective character of secondary qualities too.

In his socio-political views Diderot remained on positions of idealism. That is why, fighting against the feudal relations which existed in France, he at the same time was in favour of an enlightened monarchy.

Assessing Diderot's philosophy, Lenin noted that he came up close to the views of contemporary materialism. Engels drew attention to the "fine examples" of dialectics in Diderot's works. His main philosophical works are: *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature* (*Thoughts for Interpreting Nature*), *Entretien entre d'Alembert et Diderot* (*Conversation of D'Alembert and Diderot*) and *Principes philosophiques sur la matière et le mouvement* (*Philosophical Principles of Matter and Motion*).

Paul Holbach (1723-1789) most fully systema-

tised the views of the French materialists. His book *Système de la nature* (*System of Nature*) gained wide renown and was regarded by his contemporaries as the Bible of materialism. Holbach held that matter is primary and uncreatable, exists independent of man's consciousness and is infinite in time and space. The universe, a colossal combination of everything existing, consists of matter and motion. Holbach drew near to a consistently materialist understanding of motion, and, moreover, expressed ideas which underlie the contemporary doctrine of matter and motion. In his *System of Nature*, replying to the question whence nature gained its motion, he noted that motion is an intrinsic state of matter. "... Motion is a mode of existence which necessarily follows from the essence of matter. ... Matter moves thanks to its own energy."

Claude Helvétius (1715-1771), like all French materialists, held that the world is material, infinite and in a state of constant motion. He did not sever matter from thinking, considering consciousness a property of matter organised in a special way at a definite stage of its development. But he did not overcome 17th-century mechanicism in questions of motion.

Helvétius made a substantial contribution to the materialist theory of knowledge. He went farther than Locke, considering sensations a result of the influence of objects of the external world on man's sense-organs. In his opinion, sensations are the sole source of man's knowledge.

Problems of ethics and social order hold an important place in the teaching of Helvétius. He criticised the theory of innate inequality in the capabilities of people. Helvétius formulated his own theory of equality of mental capacity of people and explained differences in intellectual, psychical and other development by the conditions of the environment understood as the system of education. Helvétius was an idealist in his views of society, because he considered the human mind and passions the driving forces of social development. At the same time he voiced suppositions about the role of material conditions in the life of society, stressing the importance of man's activity aimed at satisfying his needs and recognising the role of industry in social development. Here were rudiments of a materialist view of social life.

Helvétius's humanistic doctrine of equality of men's capabilities and the decisive role of the environment in shaping the personality, and his just demands to combine the interests of the individual and society, although unfeasible at the time, actually prepared the ground for utopian socialism and to a certain extent are also reflected in the theory of scientific communism. The main works of Helvétius are *De l'Esprit (Essays on the Mind)* and *De l'Homme (Treatise on Man)*.

French 18th-century materialism was a great step forward in the development of philosophy. Its proponents consistently and unreservedly advocated materialism, despite prevailing scholasticism

and theology. They rightly approached the fundamental question of philosophy, acting on the premise that the external world exists independently of man's consciousness, and persistently sought for an explanation of this world in the world itself, without any "outside elements" in the form of god or spirit. They in the main succeeded in getting rid of the theological survivals which weighted down the materialists of the 16th-17th centuries.

Materialism of the 18th century ideologically prepared the ground for the French bourgeois revolution, played a big part in the struggle against idealism, in the theoretical justification of atheism and in the development of the natural sciences. The French materialists exerted a favourable influence on the elaboration of theories of utopian socialism.*

Despite certain limitations of French 18th-century materialism which did not overcome metaphysics and mechanicism inherent in preceding philosophy, Marx and Engels stressed its great progressive role.

Engels, evaluating French 18th-century materialism, noted that migrating from England, materialism in France, too, at first remained an exclusively aristocratic doctrine. "But soon," Engels noted,

* Pre-Marxist socialist doctrines which expounded sweeping unfeasible plans for the remaking of society along socialist lines, proceeding not from the class struggle and the laws of social development, but from dreams of an ideal social system.—*Ed.*

"its revolutionary character asserted itself. The French materialists did not limit their criticism to matters of religious beliefs; they extended it to whatever scientific tradition or political institution they met with; and to prove the claim of their doctrine to universal application, they took the shortest cut, and boldly applied it to all subjects of knowledge in the giant work after which they were named—the *Encyclopédie*."*

In one or another form, as open materialism or as deism, materialism became the world outlook of the entire educated youth in France. Its influence was so strong that during the Great French Revolution this doctrine, brought into the world by the British royalists, provided the French republicans and terrorists with the theoretical banner and the text for the Declaration of Human Rights.

Marx gave a concise but profound analysis of the history of French materialism in his book *The Holy Family*.**

§ 4. German Idealist Philosophy at the Turn of the 19th Century

German idealist philosophy holds a prominent place in the history of philosophy. It reflected in its own way the contradictory nature of Germany's development on the eve of the bourgeois revolu-

* Marx, Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 107.

** See Marx, *The Holy Family*.

tion. Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were the most outstanding exponents of this school.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is considered the founder of classical German idealism.

Kant's philosophy is contradictory. Alongside idealist content it contains important materialist propositions. Kant's activity is divided into the pre-critical and the critical periods. In the pre-critical period (up to 1770) he studied primarily questions of natural science and formulated a number of valuable scientific postulates based on materialism. Proceeding from the discoveries of Newton, Descartes, Galileo and other scientists, Kant in his *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels* (*General Natural History and Theory of the Sky*) gave a sweeping, basically materialist theory and history of the universe. He explained not only the structure of the solar system but also tried scientifically to interpret its origin. He held that the formation of the solar system was a result of the law-governed development of matter, assuming that initially it was a huge rarified nebula of particles of matter. Kant advanced other scientific hypotheses which exerted a great impact on the subsequent development of science. In particular, he voiced the assumption that the velocity of the Earth's daily rotation is slowed down by the tides; he proposed a system for classification of animals by the order of their possible origin. Kant expressed progressive ideas about the natural origin of human races. His works on natural science are important because in

them he upheld the idea of development and historicism.

Engels highly valued Kant's services to science. "The Kantian theory of the origin of all existing celestial bodies from rotating nebular masses was the greatest advance made by astronomy since Copernicus," Engels wrote. "For the first time the conception that nature had no history in time began to be shaken. . . . Kant made the first breach in this conception, which corresponded exactly to the metaphysical mode of thought, and he did it in such a scientific way that most of the proofs furnished by him still hold good today."*

In the subsequent, "critical" period of his activity Kant subjected to doubt the ability of human reason to cognise the surrounding world; he took a stand of agnosticism and tried to provide grounds for an idealist view of the world.

Kant inflicted much harm on philosophy by his theory of knowledge. Admitting that things exist outside man, he held that the human mind is incapable of knowing them. Reason, in his opinion, can cognise only phenomena, but things-in-themselves remain unknowable. He thus dug a chasm between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. He limited knowledge to faith; he completely separated space and time from the things-in-themselves, considering the former subjective and a priori forms of human sensation.

Kant's philosophy of the "critical" period is

* Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 82-83.

contradictory because it combines the materialist recognition of things outside man with the idealist denial of the possibility of knowing these things-in-themselves. Lenin said on this point: "When Kant assumes that something outside us, a thing-in-itself, corresponds to our ideas, he is a materialist. When he declares this thing-in-itself to be unknowable, transcendental, other-sided, he is an idealist."*

The contradictory nature of Kant's doctrine resulted in that he was criticised both by materialists, for inconsistent application of materialism, and by idealists, for admitting the existence of things outside man (thing-in-itself).

Fichte (1762-1814) was the next, in point of time, proponent of classical German idealism.

He was a subjective idealist. Fichte rejected the Kantian thing-in-itself and held that the external world is created by the absolute subject, the ego, who possesses active creative ability.

In elaborating his system of categories of being and thinking Fichte formulated a number of theses which played a part in the subsequent development of dialectics.

Schelling (1775-1854) was an outstanding German idealist philosopher who tried to supplement Fichte's subjective philosophy by objective idealism. He studied problems of the philosophy of nature, holding, in contrast to Fichte, that the objective is primary.

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 198.

Later on Schelling turned to a new form of objective idealism, formulating his doctrine of the identity of the subject and object, and in the last years of his life turned to mysticism, creating a philosophy of mythology and revelation. In this period Schelling came out against any philosophy based on reason.

Schelling's philosophy, like Fichte's, contained rational ideas about development in nature and also some progressive ideas in connection with his views on freedom.

German idealist philosophy reached its apex in the philosophy of Hegel (1770-1831).

Hegel sought to create an all-embracing complete philosophy based on the principle that the "absolute idea", universal reason, underlies everything. The "absolute idea" creates everything and, as it develops, ultimately achieves self-knowledge.

The "absolute idea" develops in three stages. First, the idea develops within itself, revealing its content in the form of logical categories. Second, the idea develops in the form of "other-being", it turns into nature. Lastly, the idea develops in thinking and history (in the "spirit") where it returns to itself and achieves self-knowledge in various forms of human consciousness and activity. Hegel held that his philosophy consummates the self-development of the "absolute idea" and its self-knowledge.

Hegel contributed works on logic, the history of philosophy, aesthetics, the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of history and the philosophy of

law. But his greatest service is the study of problems of human knowledge. In this sphere Hegel accomplished more than any other philosopher before him.

After Aristotle, Hegel was the first to undertake a thorough study of the forms of human thinking and give a general picture of the history of human knowledge.

To appreciate Hegel's contribution to the development of philosophy we should recall that in the 18th and even in early 19th century the metaphysical method was still strong in philosophy. Even the most progressive materialist philosophical systems could not rid themselves of the dominance of metaphysics, despite individual profoundly dialectical surmises of some of the founders of these systems.

Drawing on the achievements of science in his time, Hegel widely applied the principle of development in philosophy and, struck a telling blow at the metaphysical method of thinking which prevailed in the 17th and 18th centuries. He developed the ideas of the ancient Greek philosophers and, relying on science, created a dialectical method, although on an idealistic basis. Hegel's dialectics undoubtedly was a much higher stage as compared with the dialectics of the ancient Greeks.

It is the elaboration and formulation of the principal laws and categories of dialectics that constitute Hegel's greatest contribution. Studying the problems of thinking and knowledge, Hegel

formulated theses which made it possible subsequently to define correctly such philosophical categories as essence and phenomenon, general and individual, necessity and chance, freedom and necessity; he also elaborated other problems of dialectics, which later on was highly useful in the creation of the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. In particular, he spoke definitely about the existence of universal dialectical connection and interdependence in the world.

The most essential thing in the philosophical legacy of Hegel is the three fundamental laws of dialectics formulated by him: the law of the unity and struggle of opposites, the law of the passage of quantity into quality and the law of the negation of the negation, which provide the basis and concretise the essence of the dialectical method, the idea of development.

It should also be noted that Hegel gave a thorough criticism of agnosticism, a criticism highly assessed by Engels.

A great thinker and profound scholar, Hegel rightly divined individual moments of real historical processes. Elements of a materialist understanding of the historical process are evident in his idealist views. Hegel freed the understanding of history from metaphysics, he applied dialectics to the study of phenomena of social life and sought to reveal the inner connection in history.

Hegel's philosophical legacy is extremely involved and contradictory. In it a revolutionary dialectical method is combined with a dogmatic

conservative system. Hence it is not surprising that the spokesmen of both revolutionary and reactionary classes made use of his works.

In assessing Hegel's contribution to philosophy, two important moments should be borne in mind. First, his philosophy is a system of objective idealism. Even everything positive in it, including the revolutionary dialectical method, is developed on a false, idealist basis. Hegel laid the "absolute idea" at the cornerstone of everything existing and from it deduced the rest. "Hegel was an idealist," Engels wrote. "To him the thoughts within his brain were not the more or less abstract pictures of actual things and processes, but, conversely, things and their evolution were only the realised pictures of the 'Idea' existing somewhere from eternity before the world was."* Hegel regarded the material world, nature, as "other-being" of spirit, instead of considering consciousness, as it really is, a product of nature. He also approached from idealist positions the development of society and the problems of history. Hegel's bold revolutionary principles clashed, came into contradiction with life, because his philosophy did not give these principles a material basis, they were realised only in the sphere of "pure thought".

Second, Hegel was an ideologist of the bourgeoisie, and the contradictions in his philosophy are associated with the limited character of his bourgeois world outlook. Marx and Engels noted

* Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 38-39.

that although the bold thinker often prevailed in Hegel over the official Prussian philosopher, this did not eliminate the indisputable fact that Hegel was confined to the bounds of bourgeois ideology.

Many things in Hegel's philosophy, however, are of lasting value for science.

The founders of Marxism criticised the idealism of Hegel which made even the rational element in his philosophy, dialectics, unsuitable without thorough reworking, but they at the same time highly assessed his services in the elaboration of the dialectical method of thinking. Marx noted that "the mystification which dialectics suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner".*

Lenin, too, highly valued Hegel as a philosopher. Sharply criticising Hegel's idealism, he called for preserving and utilising Hegel's dialectics. In the article "Karl Marx"*** Lenin specially discusses the significance of Hegelian dialectics for the theory of Marxism. Lenin noted that Marx and Engels regarded Hegelian dialectics as the most comprehensive, contentful and profound theory of development and the greatest treasure of German philosophy.

German idealist philosophy at the turn of the 19th century played a particularly big part in further developing the doctrine of forms of think-

* Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 20.

** See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21.

ing; the progressive part of Hegel's philosophy, its dialectics, despite its idealist basis, was one of the prime theoretical sources of Marxist philosophy.

§ 5. Feuerbach's Materialism.
Russian 19th-Century
Materialist Philosophy

Hegel's idealism was criticised by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), whose philosophy may be regarded as the highest achievement of pre-Marxist materialism. To begin with, Feuerbach revived the traditions of materialism of the 17th and 18th century after a long period of domination by German speculative philosophy. He solved the fundamental question of philosophy in a materialist way, taking matter as primary and upholding the knowability of the world through the senses and thinking. Feuerbach's materialism is distinguished by anthropologism (from the Greek *anthropos*—man). According to Feuerbach, man, as part of nature, must be the main content of philosophy. Man represents the unity of the material and spiritual element, with the body and the activity of the brain giving rise to consciousness. This is the materialist essence of Feuerbach's anthropologism, which was an expression of the ideals of revolutionary bourgeois democracy and played an important part in the struggle against idealism and religion. But upholding materialism and attacking Hegel's idealist philosophy, Feuerbach failed to discern the rational content of the

latter and, together with idealism, he jettisoned Hegelian dialectics.

Though he placed man in the centre of his philosophy, Feuerbach was unable to apply a consistently materialist viewpoint in this question, was unable to understand the full profundity of man's essence as embodied in his practical activity in society throughout history. Taking man outside society as an abstract individual, Feuerbach put to the foreground his biological essence.

Proceeding from this abstract individual outside society, he constructed his theory of morality which does not depend on any socio-economic relations and therefore is practically inapplicable to any concrete conditions.

Despite his limited views Feuerbach played a great part in the development of a scientific materialist world outlook. Marx and Engels spoke of the tremendous impact exerted by his philosophy on the shaping of their views. It was one of the theoretical sources of dialectical materialism.

Feuerbach's main works are: *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie* (*A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy*), *Das Wesen des Christenthums* (*The Essence of Christianity*) and *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (*Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*).

The world outlook of the Russian revolutionary democrats (V. G. Belinsky, 1811-1848; A. I. Herzen, 1812-1870; N. G. Chernyshevsky, 1828-1889 and N. A. Dobrolyubov, 1836-1861) constituted

another, higher stage in the development of materialist philosophy.

They were the ideologists and inspirers of the revolutionary democratic movement in Russia against serfdom and tsarism. This movement reached its highest point in the 1860s and 1870s. Drawing on data of natural science, the Russian progressive thinkers advocated the material unity of the world and man. They criticised idealism and upheld the materialist postulates of science concerning the objective character of nature, considering that everything around man is merely different forms of matter. They explained the diversity of forms of matter by the constant changeability of the world in which objective laws of development, independent of man, operate. They presented a splendid critique of Hegel's idealism and Kant's agnosticism.

The Russian revolutionary democrats sought dialectically to approach phenomena of the external world, expressing many valuable thoughts about the development of nature and society. Lenin, for example, noted that "Herzen came right up to dialectical materialism and halted—before historical materialism".*

The revolutionary democratic nature of the views of the Russian 19th-century thinkers told on their understanding of social phenomena. They came close to understanding the laws governing social development and also the importance of the

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 26.

class struggle and the role of the masses and the individual in history. Lenin in particular said that the spirit of class struggle pervaded Chernyshevsky's works.

The Russian revolutionary democrats shared the views of utopian socialists claiming that Russia would arrive at socialism via the peasant commune. They were unable as yet to see the social force, the proletariat, capable of leading the working peasantry to fight for socialism. But the utopian socialism of the Russian revolutionary democrats substantially differed from the West European. They held that socialism can be achieved only through the revolutionary struggle of the people.

Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and their followers continued the long-standing materialist tradition which came down from such eminent Russian thinkers of the 18th century as M. V. Lomonosov and A. N. Radishchev. Upholding and developing materialist ideas, the Russian revolutionary democrats struck a tangible blow at idealist philosophy and played a great part in the development of philosophical thought.

But in the conditions of their time they were incapable of rising to dialectical materialism, whose birth wrought a real revolution in philosophy.

* * *

The theoretical prerequisites for a scientific, materialist world outlook were gradually created

in the course of the struggle between materialism and idealism throughout the history of philosophy.

In each epoch philosophy dealt with definite tasks put forward by the requirements of some or other social classes. Social needs compelled man to study ever more deeply the world around him and this necessarily resulted in the development of a materialist understanding of the world.

Pre-Marxist materialist philosophy did much in introducing a correct view of the outside world.

By their naïve materialist doctrines the ancient philosophers focussed man's attention on the realities around him, diverting him from futile religious and mythological teachings.

Ancient materialists, on the basis of rudimentary knowledge of astronomy, mathematics and physics, formulated the first materialist theories which refuted the religious mythological ideas of the world prevailing at that time. This was their greatest contribution.

The ancient materialists put forward the idea of the primacy of matter and created harmonious atomic doctrines. The ancient Greek materialists also provided the rudiments of a dialectical approach to phenomena of the external world. Both the materialism of the ancient Greeks and their dialectics were of a naïve and spontaneous character. They were substantiated in a later period.

During the Middle Ages when materialist philosophy was neglected, and philosophy in general was subordinated to religion, materialism in the form of nominalism barely made itself felt within

scholasticism; it was unable to grasp the connection between general concepts and the objectively existing things and phenomena of the external world.

Beginning with the epoch of the Renaissance materialism gave a powerful impetus to the development of the sciences emancipating them from the stifling grip of scholasticism.

Philosophy was further developed in the doctrines of English and French materialists of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Engels pointed out that philosophers of that period, beginning with Spinoza and ending with the French materialists, "insisted on explaining the world from the world itself and left the justification in detail to the natural science of the future".*

In the subsequent period materialists comprehensively elaborated general problems of being and also many questions related to the structure of matter, its attributes and forms of existence. They raised and solved in their own way questions of space and time, relationship of motion and matter, and so on. Elements of a dialectical view of nature began to appear in materialist doctrines on a new, scientific basis.

But a certain limitedness was intrinsic in all pre-Marxist materialism; it was determined both by the general level of science and the development of social production and social relations.

* Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 26.

To begin with, pre-Marxist materialism was mechanistic. All kinds of motion up to the most intricate—social life and thinking—were reduced to elementary, mechanical motion. Materialism of this kind presented in a coarse, vulgar and simplified way the entire intricate world with its multifarious qualities and colours, reducing it to mechanics and mathematical formulas.

Moreover, it was predominantly metaphysical, and the idea of development was alien to it. Some philosophers prior to Marx voiced very important propositions concerning the dialectical character of development in nature. But not one of them, except the ancient Greeks, tried to formulate these propositions as a universal principle.

Lastly, pre-Marxist materialism did not extend to social phenomena which it explained from an idealist point of view.

All materialists prior to Marx exaggerated the role of consciousness in social development, not understanding the real relationship of social being and social consciousness. It is this that explains why not only idealists but also almost all materialists of the past oriented themselves on geniuses, on outstanding personalities, without attaching decisive importance to the people, to the masses. This also explains why philosophical doctrines were primarily addressed to an insignificant minority, to the aristocracy of the spirit which supposedly was the only one capable of creating a just social system. This, strictly speaking, is also the source of the passivity of old materialism, the essence of

which was formulated by Marx as follows: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."^{*}

Expressing the interests of the working class, Marx and Engels created the philosophy which is the spiritual weapon of the oppressed in the struggle against capitalism and a powerful means for remaking the world.

^{*} Marx, Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 405.

III. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

§ 1. The Rise of Marxist Philosophy and Its Basic Difference from Preceding Philosophy

The new stage in the development of philosophy is associated with the emergence of the working class onto the historical scene. The great leaders of the working class Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820-1895) were the fathers of the philosophy of the new revolutionary class. The philosophy they created is named dialectical materialism. It radically differs from all preceding philosophy not only by its harmony and consistency, but above all by expressing the world outlook of the working class and theoretically justifying its struggle for the revolutionary remaking of the world in the interests of the workingmen.

Having originated in the 1840s, Marxism inherited everything progressive in the ideological development of human society during its long history. Marxism sums up the entire experience of human society, it critically generalises and develops English classical political economy, French utopian socialism and classical German philosophy.

Lenin formulated highly important methodolog-

ical propositions concerning the attitude of Marxism to the ideological legacy of the past. Marxism won its world-historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, Lenin wrote, "far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, Marxism, on the contrary, has assimilated and reshaped the more valuable elements accumulated in the course of more than two thousand years of development of human thought and culture".*

Marxism discarded from the doctrines of the past everything negative and obsolete resulting from the narrow class limitations of thinkers of the past, backwardness of social relations and the low level of scientific knowledge in those days but preserved, assimilated and developed everything of value to mankind.

Classical German philosophy of the 19th century, above all the philosophy of Hegel and Feuerbach, was the direct theoretical source of Marxist philosophy. Marx and Engels, drawing on preceding materialism, particularly on Feuerbach's teaching, radically reworked Hegel's idealist dialectics, scientifically reshaped it and at the same time showed that genuinely scientific dialectics could be created only on the basis of materialism.

Marx pointed out that his dialectical method differed at the root from the Hegelian and was the direct opposite of it. "To Hegel," Marx wrote, "the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the

* Lenin, *On Socialist Ideology and Culture*, p. 63.

process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."*

Hegelian dialectics, released from its idealistic trappings and mystification, and converted, as a result of radical reworking, into a scientific materialist method, became a sharp ideological weapon of the proletariat. "In its rational form," Marx wrote, "it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."** The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels is not a mere synthesis of Hegel's dialectics and Feuerbach's materialism, as some philosophers claimed. Marxist philosophy rests on the latest achievements of science; it is also a scientific

* Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 19.

** *Ibid.*, p. 20.

generalisation of the practical experience of the revolutionary working-class movement.

At the time Marxism developed science had deeply penetrated both inorganic and organic nature. "Today," Engels wrote, "the whole of nature lies spread out before us as a system of interconnections and processes that, at least in its main features, has been explained and understood."*

Great discoveries in natural science were made in the 19th century: discovery of the law of conservation and transformation of energy, the doctrine of the cellular structure of living organisms and Darwin's evolutionary theory. These discoveries showed that the metaphysical method of thinking was incompatible with the achievements of science. They led directly to the elaboration of a dialectical method of knowledge. In the mid-19th century when the repeated actions of the working class against the bourgeoisie began to lay bare the class contradictions of capitalist society, the prerequisites arose for a dialectical approach to social phenomena.

For the first time in the history of philosophy dialectical materialism began to consider all phenomena of nature and society in their universal connection and interdependence, in continuous motion and change not only in space, but in time as well.

Having extended materialism to social

* Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 202.

phenomena, Marxism established that the mode of production plays a decisive part in the development of society. Social being, above all the production of material wealth, determines social consciousness. The development of society depends on material causes, and not on the ideas and wishes of people. As a result, the history of society began to be viewed not as a chance conglomerate of phenomena, but as a law-governed process of the succession of lower modes of production by higher, a process subordinated to objective laws not dependent on the will of man.

By creating dialectical materialism and also extending its principles to social phenomena, Marx and Engels made the greatest revolution in philosophy.

What is the qualitative difference of dialectical materialism from preceding philosophical systems? First, Marxist philosophy attained organic unity of materialism and dialectics. It examines all phenomena of nature and society from a consistently dialectical materialist view. Second, only since the discovery of the materialist understanding of history by Marx has philosophy become an ideological weapon of the oppressed.

For the first time in world history the working people received their own ideology, and thereby were emancipated from the influence of the ideology of the oppressors. No revolution can be made without a revolution in the minds of the people. The social and economic emancipation of the proletariat began with its ideological emancipation.

"Marx's philosophical materialism alone," Lenin wrote, "has shown the proletariat the way out of the spiritual slavery in which all oppressed classes have hitherto languished."* Basing himself on the materialist understanding of social development, Engels could assert with full right that henceforward the working class must replace the bourgeoisie and head the historical process. The interests of the bourgeois, according to Engels, "are inseparably bound up with the existing system and he is a dead man for any forward movement".**

With the emergence of Marxist philosophy mankind received a genuinely scientific world outlook for the first time in its history. Revealing the objective laws governing the development of nature, society and thinking, it arms man with a powerful instrument for his transformatory activity. Marxist philosophy may be called revolutionary in the full sense of the word because it aims not only to interpret the world but also to change it.

By combining materialist theory with the social practice of mankind, Marxism demonstrates that if theory correctly reflects the needs of society it is irrepressible. That is why in a historically brief period Marxist theory gained tremendous influence among the working people.

The major philosophical works of Marx and Engels include: *The German Ideology*, *The Holy Family*, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*,

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 28.

** Marx, Engels, *Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. III, p. 417.

Capital, Anti-Dühring, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, The Poverty of Philosophy and the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.

§ 2. Development of Marxist Philosophy by Lenin

The further development of dialectical materialism in a new historical epoch, the epoch of imperialism, is inseparably associated with the name of Lenin (1870-1924), loyal continuer of Marx.

Engels pointed out that idealism had exhausted its wisdom by the mid-19th century and was mortally wounded in 1848. The bourgeoisie emerged victorious from the revolutionary events of 1848, but it felt that guns alone did not suffice against its formidable enemy, the working class. The Paris Commune of 1871, when the working class came out with its own political demands, showed the bourgeoisie even more clearly that it was necessary to create a theoretical weapon to combat proletarian ideology.

In contrast to the materialism of Marx which proved the need for the revolutionary remaking of the world, the bourgeoisie sought to produce a philosophy which in a most veiled form could combat the ideology of the proletariat so as to weaken the striving of the masses for revolutionary changes and thereby postpone the oncoming fall of capitalism. Since there was no suitable

new idealist doctrine, it had to resort to the teachings of neo-Hegelians and neo-Kantians. Later on, the philosophy of positivism and various schools of irrationalism appeared.

At first neo-Kantianism was the main theoretical mainstay of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the philosophy of Marxism.

Rejecting the materialist theory of Marx, neo-Kantians analysed bourgeois social relations from idealist positions, covering them up by the flag of objectivism. Lenin criticised neo-Kantianism in a number of his early works and upheld Marx's materialist views on society. The well-known Marxist G. V. Plekhanov likewise criticised neo-Kantianism.

The philosophy of empirio-criticism or Machism was another variety of idealist philosophy which best suited the interests of the bourgeoisie. One of the trends of positivism, empirio-criticism, tried to utilise the achievements of natural science for fighting materialism.

The philosophy of empirio-criticism, expressed most clearly in the works of Mach and Avenarius, was swiftly picked up by the ideologists of the reactionary bourgeoisie and widely circulated in most of the developed countries. It became the chief weapon of struggle against dialectical materialism.

Lenin gave a crushing rebuff to this philosophy which was hostile to the proletariat. He realised that it was an obstacle to winning over ideologically the people to the side of the revolution.

The reactionary philosophy of Machism was subjected to devastating criticism in Lenin's book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. From positions of consistently revolutionary materialism Lenin defended Marxist philosophy from the attacks of the Machists and further developed its basic principles.

Let us examine, even if only in general outline, Lenin's critical analysis of empirio-criticism and then it will be clear what contribution Lenin made to dialectical materialism.

Progress of the natural science at the turn of the 20th century, especially discoveries in physics, radically altered the old physical picture of the world. This prompted some natural scientists to draw the wrong conclusion that in physics there are no laws, no absolute truths in general. These scientists began to assert that scientific theories have no objective value and that all truths are relative. Materialism, they claimed, had been destroyed, inasmuch as the absolute and immutable properties of things had been shown to be non-existent and the "substance" and "essence" of all things had vanished. Everything is only relative, asserted these natural scientists whom Lenin called physical idealists.

In their attempts to undermine the foundations of the materialist world outlook, bourgeois philosophers lost no time in exploiting the vacillations of scientists who wrongly interpreted the latest achievements of physics.

Idealist philosophers tried to exploit the dis-

covery that the atom is divisible for refuting the doctrine of matter. To this end they also attempted to utilise the discovery of the dependence of the mass on the velocity of motion. The enemies of materialism argued as follows: the atom is divisible, there is no impenetrable and inert mass, no immutable elements exist, energy creates the mass, consequently, there is no matter either, it is a myth. "Matter has vanished!"—such was the joyous cry which resounded in the camp of materialism's foes at the beginning of the 20th century. They were confident that the doctrine of matter as the foundation of being had been refuted by the latest discoveries of physics.

Lenin, however, showed that the idealists crowed too soon. He demonstrated in greatest detail that the latest discoveries in physics in no way refuted the materialist propositions of Marxism. These discoveries refuted the views of mechanistic and metaphysical materialism, but at the same time confirmed the propositions of dialectical materialism and laid new scientific foundations under it.

After thoroughly analysing the wrong conclusions drawn by physicists from the latest discoveries, Lenin established two objective reasons of an epistemological nature which may lead natural scientists, even if they are not conscious enemies of materialism, to slip down to idealism.

Lenin showed that the achievements of natural science, by creating unprecedented conditions for the abstract mathematical analysis of data on

elementary particles, led to the possibility of divorcing these quantitative abstractions from their real material basis. Ultimately, scientists who have not mastered dialectics may often arrive at the denial of the objective value of scientific theories and the Kantian idea that the mind prescribes laws to nature.

Another reason, according to Lenin, is the elevation into an absolute of the principle of relativity of our knowledge. This principle, imposed with particular zeal on physicists, in the period of the break-up of old theories "inevitably leads to idealism" ... "*if the latter (meaning scientists.—I.K.) are ignorant of dialectics*".*

Lenin revealed the fallacy of elevating relativism into an absolute and developed the ideas of dialectical materialism concerning the relationship of the absolute and the relative. Relativism is a component of dialectics, but dialectics is not reduced to relativism. Dialectical materialism insists on the approximate, relative nature of any scientific proposition concerning the structure of matter and its properties, on the absence of absolute boundaries in nature and on the passage of moving matter from one state into another. But on these grounds one must not deny absolute truth and fail to see the interconnection of the absolute and the relative.

Lenin emphasised that physicists slipped down to idealism because of their ignorance of dialectics.

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 308.

They refuted the one-sided character of the old materialism with its metaphysical and mechanistic approach. But they themselves were not equipped with the proper theory and, together with a denial of the immutability of the elements and properties of matter known at that time, also denied matter, i.e., the objective reality of the entire surrounding world; together with a denial of the absolute character of the laws known to science, they also denied any objective law in nature; they declared the laws of nature to be a mere convention. In contraposition to the conclusions of the physical idealists about the disappearance of matter, Lenin presented genuinely scientific conclusions from data of contemporary natural science based on dialectical materialism.

Lenin showed that from the viewpoint of dialectical materialism the only immutable thing is the reflection by man's consciousness of the continuously developing external world, which is independent of this consciousness. He wrote in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*: "No other 'immutability', no other 'essence', no other 'absolute substance', in the sense in which these concepts were depicted by the empty professorial philosophy, exist for Marx and Engels. The 'essence' of things, or 'substance', is *also* relative; it expresses only the degree of profundity of man's knowledge of objects; and while yesterday the profundity of this knowledge did not go beyond the atom, and today does not go beyond the electron and ether, dialectical materialism insists on

the temporary, relative, approximate character of all these *milestones*, in the knowledge of nature gained by the progressing science of man. The electron is as *inexhaustible* as the atom, nature is infinite, but it infinitely *exists*. And it is this sole categorical, this sole unconditional recognition of nature's *existence* outside the mind and perception of man that distinguishes dialectical materialism from relativist agnosticism and idealism."*

Physical idealists, considering all old truths relative, at the same time denied the existence of any objective truth independent of mankind. But dialectical materialism proceeds from the premise that "relative truths represent relatively faithful reflections of an object independent of mankind".** And since "every scientific truth, notwithstanding its relative nature, contains an element of absolute truth",*** the sum of relative truths in their development yields absolute truth.

Any one-sidedness, any exaggeration of any aspect or feature of the dialectical, intricate process of knowledge leads to a deviation from dialectical materialism and hence, sooner or later, may ultimately lead to idealism.

Developing dialectical materialism, Lenin demonstrated that the concept of matter cannot remain unchangeable, first, because our knowledge

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 262.

** *Ibid.*, p. 309.

*** *Ibid.*

constantly progresses and we cognise ever deeper diverse properties of matter and its structure; second, because matter itself is in a state of continuous motion and development and, consequently, the object of knowledge itself changes too.

Summing up the achievements of all preceding philosophy, Lenin has given a definition of matter which leads the natural scientists out of the blind alley and helps to overcome the old, unscientific, undialectical and mechanistic materialism.

Here is this definition: "Matter is a philosophical category denoting the objective reality which is given to man by his sensations, and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of them."*

The only property of matter, with whose recognition Lenin associated philosophical materialism, "is the property of *being an objective reality*, of existing outside the mind".**

Whatever our notions of the properties and structure of matter are, it is indisputable that it exists as objective reality independent of man's mind.

Lenin optimistically viewed the development of science. Contemporary physics, he said, was advancing and would undoubtedly arrive at dialectical materialism. But at the same time he also showed the obstacles in the way of physics which

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 130.

** *Ibid.*, p. 261.

marched towards the only true philosophy of natural science, dialectical materialism.

In addition to epistemological, cognitive roots of physical idealism (of which we spoke earlier), Lenin simultaneously revealed its class roots. Tracing the division of physicists into materialist and idealist camps in the principal European countries, Lenin arrived at the conclusion that Machism, empirio-criticism, was "a certain international ideological current, which is not dependent upon any one philosophical system, but which is the result of certain general causes lying outside the sphere of philosophy".*

Lenin pointed to the prejudice of bourgeois professors against materialism, which is explained by the general conditions in which scientists live in capitalist countries, and said that the entire environment repelled them from Marx and Engels and threw them into the arms of banal official philosophy.

The Machists who sought to exploit modern science in the interest of idealism, betrayed, as Lenin put it, natural science to the clergy and denounced natural scientific materialism. This most strikingly showed that bourgeois reaction utilised empirio-criticism for its class purposes.

Lenin demonstrated the real class face of the philosophy of empirio-criticism.

"A red thread that runs through *all* the writing

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 302.

of *all* the Machists," Lenin pointed out, "is the stupid claim to have 'risen above' materialism and idealism, to have transcended this 'obsolete' anti-thesis; but *in fact* this whole fraternity is *continually* sliding into idealism and is conducting a steady and incessant struggle against materialism."*

There is no third line in philosophy nor can there be any; a third line inevitably leads to the camp of materialism's enemies. Starting with Kant, the Machists went back to Berkeley and Hume, that is, to subjective idealism.

The epistemology of Machism is pervaded with the spirit of struggle against materialism.

"... Behind the epistemological scholasticism of empirio-criticism," Lenin wrote, "one must not fail to see the struggle of parties in philosophy, a struggle which in the last analysis reflects the tendencies and ideology of the antagonistic classes in modern society. Recent philosophy is as partisan as was philosophy two thousand years ago. The contending parties are essentially—although this is concealed by a pseudo-erudite quackery of new terms or by a weak-minded non-partisanship—materialism and idealism."**

Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* made an epoch in the development of philosophy and natural science. In it materialism received a new form corresponding to the new level of science.

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 341.

** *Ibid.*, p. 358.

Lenin elaborated many problems of philosophy in his *Philosophical Notebooks* and also in a number of other works dealing with concrete questions of the revolutionary movement. He summed up in a dialectical materialist way the new data of natural science and greatly enriched Marxist philosophy. He deepened the philosophical understanding of matter and such forms of its existence as motion, space and time; he gave a philosophical substantiation to the inexhaustibility of the properties of matter and further developed the Marxist teaching of the laws and categories of materialist dialectics. Lenin paid special attention to elaborating the law of the unity and struggle of opposites, regarding it as the essence, the core of dialectics.

Lenin provided a profound grounding to the materialist theory of knowledge, by developing the doctrine of objective truth and revealing on new natural scientific data the dialectics of knowledge and the relationship of absolute and relative truths. His proposition on stages in the process of knowledge—from living contemplation to abstract thinking and from it to practical activity—is an exceptionally important contribution to the philosophy of Marxism.

All of Lenin's theoretical and practical activity was devoted to elaborating and applying the Marxist doctrine. He greatly contributed to defending and further developing the materialist understanding of history. The new historical epoch confronted the working class, its Communist Party

founded by Lenin, with the task of destroying capitalism and building socialism. That is why Lenin devoted so much attention to analysing the laws governing the development of society. He created a new theory of the socialist revolution which had a tremendous impact on the course of social development.

Lenin enriched the Marxist teaching of the class struggle, dictatorship of the proletariat, the role of the masses in history and the role of the party of the working class.

In the last years of his life Lenin worked much on theoretical problems of building the new, socialist society. To this day Lenin's ideas illumine the road to the working people in their struggle for the revolutionary remaking of the world and building socialism and communism.

Lenin gave a model of developing dialectical and historical materialism in inseverable connection with the progress of science, summing up the historic transformatory activity of the working people in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Lenin analysed and summarised the experience of the working class and the national liberation movement and treated problems pertaining to the radical transformation of the economy and culture, always attaching great importance to strengthening the new materialist world outlook. In his philosophical testament, the article "Importance of Militant Materialism" written shortly before his death, Lenin expounded a detailed programme of

struggle against hostile idealist philosophy. In this article he told editors of the journal *Pod Zname-nem Marxizma* (*Under the Banner of Marxism*), which at that time was a philosophical theoretical periodical studying problems of the new world outlook, that the journal must wage an irreconcilable struggle against idealism, and advised to make it an instrument of militant materialism. Lenin drew attention to the need for strengthening the alliance of militant materialists with materialist natural scientists under the leadership of militant materialist dialecticians.

We must realise, Lenin wrote in this article, "that unless it stands on solid philosophical ground no natural science, and no materialism, can hold its own in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of the bourgeois world outlook".*

Since Lenin's death, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of other countries have been creatively developing the theoretical legacy of Marxism-Leninism as applied to the new historical conditions.

The 20th, 21st and 22nd congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union made an outstanding contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory. They creatively solved such prime theoretical problems as the dictatorship of the proletariat in present-day conditions; laws governing the development of socialism into communism and the

* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 19.

more or less simultaneous entry of socialist countries into communism; ways of building the material and technical basis of communism; the shaping of communist social relations and the education of the new man; diversity of forms for transition from capitalism to socialism; the characteristic features of the contemporary epoch; the possibility of preventing world war in our time, etc. The 22nd Congress of the C.P.S.U. adopted the programme of building communism in the U.S.S.R. which is rightly called the Communist Manifesto of our age.

* * *

Dialectical and historical materialism, which for the first time revealed in so all embracing a way the laws governing the development of nature and society, gave mankind a genuinely scientific basis for its transformatory activity.

Marxism came into being, grew and triumphed in the course of relentless struggle against different idealist trends in philosophy and sociology.

Dialectical materialism, drawing on data of science and man's practical activities in society, eliminated the limitations of old materialism, removed the fetters of agnosticism and scepticism and, demonstrating the omnipotence and power of human knowledge, opened up boundless prospects for cognising and transforming the world.

Interpreting phenomena of nature in a consistently materialist way and extending materialism

to social phenomena, Marxism discovered the material foundations and true laws of social development and also the social force, the working class, destined to advance society along the road of progress.

The unbreakable tie of theory with revolutionary practice is a major distinctive feature of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

As far back as in 1844 in his early work *Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Law*, Marx wrote: "The weapon of criticism cannot of course replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory too becomes a material force as soon as it grips the minds of the masses."*

Marx continued: "Just as philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat, so does the proletariat find its spiritual weapon in philosophy."**

The philosophical doctrine of Marxism is an instrument of theoretical knowledge and at the same time an effective means in man's practical work of remaking the world.

The world outlook of the proletariat is increasingly spreading. But as long as capitalism exists, the class roots of idealism too are preserved because there are still forces which need an idealist, unscientific world outlook that could be pitted against scientific revolutionary philosophy, dialectical materialism.

* Marx, Engels, *Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 1, p. 422.

** *Ibid.*, p. 428.

Moreover, idealism has not only class but also epistemological roots. Human knowledge, penetrating life ever more widely and deeply, cannot, however, be guaranteed from elevating certain truths into an absolute and, consequently, from fully understandable delusions, as has been the case in the history of philosophy beginning with the ancient Greeks.

That is why the struggle of materialism and idealism does not cease in our epoch either.

IV. BASIC TRENDS OF CONTEMPORARY BOURGEOIS IDEALIST PHILOSOPHY

Main Features of Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy

Contemporary idealist philosophy in its various manifestations expresses the world outlook of the bourgeoisie. The common feature of all contemporary bourgeois philosophy is its hostility for the scientific, materialist world outlook, for the philosophy of Marxism—the powerful ideological weapon of the most revolutionary class, the working class.

Present-day bourgeois philosophers, resorting to falsification, throw into one heap all forms of materialism: the naïve matérialism of antiquity, the metaphysical, mechanistic materialism of the 17th and 18th centuries and dialectical materialism. By mixing up and identifying pre-scientific forms of materialism with its highest form, they actually direct their fire against the old, metaphysical and mechanistic materialism which did not understand the wealth and diversity of man's activity in society. These critics say nothing about the fact that Marxism has overcome the one-sided vulgar contemplative nature and passivity of old materialism and that dialectical materialism takes

into consideration the inexhaustible abilities and potentialities of man.

Bourgeois philosophers claim that materialism denies the specificity of phenomena of spiritual life and vulgarly reduces them to "inert" matter. Materialism, so they say, proceeds completely only from the "coarse" economic interest of people and it holds that the economic interests, reduced to satisfying the simplest wants, fully determine intricate social life.

Contemporary bourgeois philosophy has made many attempts to refute the materialist theory of social development and the decisive significance of the economy, of the mode of production, in society's life.

Some contemporary bourgeois philosophers seek to discard rational elements in the theory of knowledge and put forward irrationalism and intuition as the principal and decisive factors of human knowledge. Subjective idealism, which wants to reduce the problem to the individual with his world of subjective emotions, is most characteristic for present-day bourgeois philosophy. Alongside of it there also exists objective idealism, primarily in the form of religious teachings.

The ideologists of the ruling classes are in general trying to discredit philosophy as a science. Hence, the various forms of empiricism and positivism, whose main purpose is to deny philosophical generalisations, because isolated facts of science and life, not being connected and general-

ised by philosophy, do not threaten their false theories and inhuman practices.

Substitution of concepts, an idealist interpretation of materialist postulates, the employment of new terms to disguise the idealist essence of present-day philosophical theories, a striving to pose as supporters of some kind of a third line which supposedly stands above both materialism and idealism—such are the characteristic methods employed by the enemies of materialism who wish to spread idealist bourgeois philosophy among the people under any guise.

Four main trends can be singled out in contemporary bourgeois idealist philosophy. These are pragmatism with its varieties in the form of pluralism and instrumentalism, neo-positivism, neo-Thomism and existentialism.

Pragmatism

William James (1842-1910) is the founder of pragmatism, a subjective idealist trend in contemporary philosophy which is widespread in the United States. He asserted that the world consists of some kind of neutral substance which is neither ideal nor material, he denied that the development of the world is law-governed and that it is knowable.

John Dewey (1859-1952) was the chief exponent of this school. He denied the materiality of the world and laid the concept of experiment at the basis of everything existing. This concept includes

all phenomena of the external world and all possible conditions of the individual: dreams, disease, falsehood, death and also work, war, magic, and so on. Pragmatism denies that it is possible for man to know the world around him. Scientific concepts, laws and hypotheses, according to this philosophy, are merely instruments of man in his struggle for existence. Therefore the usefulness of these instruments, and not objective truth, is the highest criterion of our knowledge and activity. All instruments must conform to the aim and help resolve situations, must be useful. What is useful is true—here is the chief criterion of truth, according to the pragmatists.

This is the basis of Dewey's pragmatist pedagogics. He held that the student was not interested in assimilating an integral world outlook and in the all-round development of his intellect, that he first of all must be given the knacks of "practical activity" in order to achieve personal gains.

The spread of pragmatist ideas in pedagogics has relegated to the background the study of theoretical subjects and a general education in the American school and concentrated attention on fostering narrow selfish and individualist practicality.

Dewey put up in contrast to the materialist understanding of history his own theory of so-called pluralism, according to which the most diverse factors of social life are of equal significance for social progress. He regarded social phenomena as a manifestation of moral principles

which determine the behaviour of people. Dewey denied the existence of objective laws of social development.

He consistently extolled the "American way of life" and praised bourgeois democracy, advocating harmony of classes as a requisite for social stability. Dewey thereby opposed basic social changes, justifying only reforms within the framework of the existing bourgeois state.

The proponents of pragmatism claim that it stands above materialism and idealism; they in general hold that it is necessary to study not philosophical problems but concrete problems of man, narrow practical questions of daily life.

Like other positivist trends, pragmatism in general is opposed to philosophy, above all Marxist philosophy. It best of all meets the interests of the ruling classes of the United States and is regarded as the country's official philosophy.

Pragmatism was also rather widespread in a number of European and Asian countries, but lately has begun to lose its influence.

Neo-Positivism

Neo-positivism is another major trend in contemporary idealist philosophy. The French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was the founder of positivism. This is a wide trend of subjective idealist philosophy which denies philosophy as a world outlook and considers it wrong to raise the ques-

tion of the relationship of thinking to being and other primary philosophical problems because they cannot be verified by experiment.

Instead of philosophy the positivists proposed to create a "logic of science" which would overcome the one-sidedness of materialism and idealism.

Machism was actually a variety of positivism; the same is true now of pragmatism and some other philosophical schools which recognise only positive empirical knowledge and deny philosophy as a science of the most general laws of being.

In contemporary bourgeois philosophy positivism has been revived in the form of neo-positivism which advocates agnosticism and knowledge purged of materialism. Various schools which proceed from the principle that knowledge of reality is possible only through scientific concrete thinking (semantic philosophy, logical positivism, logical empiricism and linguistic philosophy) are extreme manifestations of neo-positivism. They regard philosophy only as a science which studies the laws and logic of language in which the results of scientific thinking are recorded.

Philosophy, in the opinion of neo-positivists, cannot say anything new about the external world over and above what has been learned and formulated by the concrete sciences. That is why they leave only a logical analysis of language to philosophy.

In contrast to old positivism which held that man's limited capabilities of knowledge prevent

him from solving basic questions of philosophy, contemporary positivism in general denies philosophical problems. Neo-positivism sees its main task in "cleansing" the language of science of these pseudo-problems, placing the concept of matter at the top of the list.

Neo-positivists consider that philosophy has no right to study problems of objective reality existing outside man. Philosophy must be satisfied with direct experience, the "given" experience recorded in language. Some positivists reduce "directly given" experience to individual emotions and lapse into extreme subjectivism which denies any reality whatsoever except their own Ego.

Neo-positivism denies the existence of objective reality and rejects any objective content in scientific formulas and logical categories.

The laws of nature supposedly are only a logical conclusion from premises with which all agree in accordance with previously reached conventions.

Neo-positivists oppose the materialist understanding of history and completely deny the knowability of phenomena of social life. They have lately concentrated on an idealist interpretation of data of contemporary natural science, exerting an adverse influence on scientists and preventing them from taking a materialist stand.

Towards the end of the 1930s various trends of neo-positivism had united and named their philosophy scientific empiricism.

Neo-Thomism

Neo-Thomism is a widespread trend in contemporary bourgeois philosophy. It is based on the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, medieval philosopher, and is the official philosophy of Catholicism. Contemporary neo-Thomists treat the fundamental question of philosophy, as Thomas Aquinas did, in an idealist way. Neo-Thomists recognise "pure being" as the supreme reality. It is understood as the spiritual divine original source. The material world is declared to be derivative, secondary. The philosophy of neo-Thomism preaches some kind of an unfeasible social system—it is neither capitalist nor socialist. The Church is assigned the main role in this society.

The neo-Thomists are irreconcilable enemies of Marxist philosophy and communism.

Maritain in France, Wetter in Austria and Bochenski in West Germany are the most prominent neo-Thomists.

Existentialism

The philosophy of existentialism has gained wide currency in the recent period. The term "existence" is understood to mean the unconscious, inner being of man as distinct from his actual existence. "Existence" is manifested or, as the existentialists say, "becomes translucent", is "illuminated" in critical moments like death or periods of extreme excitation.

Existentialism arose in Germany in the 1920s. Its ideological roots extend to phenomenism of the German idealist Husserl and the religious mystic views of the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard. Some of the main postulates of the philosophy of existentialism, directed against rationalism and advocating irrationalism and intuitionism, have been borrowed from these sources.

Existentialists, like most contemporary idealist philosophers, also strive to overcome the "one-sidedness" of materialism and idealism. To this end they destroy, in their own way, the antithesis of the subject and the object, claiming that the unity of the subject and the object is embodied in "existence". "Existence" cannot be cognised, in other words, its inner world can be penetrated only with the help of intuition or "illumination".

Existentialism devotes much attention to the problem of freedom, solving it also in an irrational way, with no consideration for the objective laws of the world around man. Freedom is understood in a voluntaristic way, i.e., independent of objective necessity. The dependence of the individual on society is completely denied. Advocating the free self-assertion of the individual, existentialists refuse to see that this self-assertion is impossible in a class society. The philosophy of existentialism reflects the pessimism and hopeless position of the individual in capitalist society, the inability to give scientific answers to questions posed by present-day social life and inability to explain the contradictions of bourgeois society.

Existentialism is exerting a definite influence on contemporary art and literature.

A religious (Jaspers, Berdyaev) and an "atheist" (Heidegger, Sartre, Camus) trends are differentiated in existentialism. Politically they also hold opposite positions. While Jaspers, for example, is one of the main proponents of a nuclear war, Sartre is an active peace champion.

On the whole the philosophy of existentialism is unscientific and hostile of materialist philosophy.

* * *

An analysis of the history of philosophy shows that philosophical and social thought is ultimately determined by the economic development of society. Philosophical doctrines are a component of society's spiritual life.

The struggle of materialism and idealism which pervades the entire history of philosophy reflects the victory of new progressive ideas and views over old and obsolete views.

The history of philosophy clearly demonstrates that the pre-Marxist philosophical theories, although they contained many valuable things which enriched philosophy and science, were not consistent and scientific to the end. Only dialectical materialism, created by Marx and Engels and further developed by Lenin and the Leninists, summing up everything positive and progressive which mankind has accumulated through its social

and scientific development, is a scientific theory consistent to the end.

A Marxist analysis of the history of philosophy shows that in their striving to know the world around them every people engages in philosophical thinking. All peoples are making their contribution to the general treasure-house of knowledge and to the transformation of the world.

There are no chosen people vested with special innate capabilities, there are no superior nations just as there are no inferior nations. Any people can display their abilities provided the appropriate conditions are available. Contemporary history graphically shows how peoples formerly considered backward, on achieving national liberation, make progress and advance great thinkers from their midst. Suffice it to name Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, Jomo Kenyata and many other leaders of present-day Africa who have risen to the level of contemporary scientific and philosophical thought.

The Marxists treat with deep respect the rich and many-sided cultural legacy of all the peoples. Marxist philosophy has assimilated and critically reworked all the best created by philosophy of the past. It is for this reason that Marxist philosophy is the richest and most consistent philosophical doctrine of our age.

Dialectical materialism is a philosophy which calls for the revolutionary remaking of the world, a philosophy which opens ways for building a new life.

Marx and Engels created dialectical materialism and thereby gave the working class a powerful weapon, the like of which no revolutionary class had in the past. Employing the method of dialectical materialism, Marx and Engels were able to peer so far into the future of human society that we today, more than 100 years later, are amazed how boldly and correctly they were able, by studying the tendencies of capitalist society, to establish the direction in which mankind will develop.

Social development is proceeding in accordance with the objective laws discovered and formulated by the fathers of dialectical materialism, Marx and Engels.

REQUEST TO READERS

Progress Publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book, its translation and design, and any suggestions you may have for future publications.

Please send your comments to 21, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

